

INTRODUCTION 引言

Recognition of one's inadequacy is the first step toward resolving a problem. It takes some humility to say: "I need help." What is true for a strong-will person is also true for a rebellious nation. The spiritual status of Israel in the Bible can be summarized in one word: disobedient. The book of Nehemiah is about a turning point in the history of God's people. They went back to their homeland after the Babylonian exile. People overcame difficulties and resistance, and they rebuilt the temple and the wall of Jerusalem. After the hardware was done they must also renovate the software. They had to restore their relationship with God. They surely knew that God used foreign nations to discipline them for their unfaithfulness. Now God gave them a second chance to make it right. After they had returned home, they had to return to God as well. Our church needs help from God too. Can we be honest and talk about family matters today? I do not want to sugarcoat it, but our church is dying. We can lament that we do not have enough manpower and resources. We can keep things safe and cozy by repeating what we have been doing for years. Before long, this small church will shrink and become a home church. Here is the good news: God is always on our side if we are on His side. We need to stop running this church the way we want. We need to ask how God wants our church to be like. The burden is not only on our coworkers but on every member who calls this place your spiritual home. That is the reason behind the Celebration Sunday today. On the one hand, we thank God for all His blessings. On the other hand, we recommit ourselves to the Lord and to this church. Just like the Israelites did, we have to review God's faithfulness, repent our sins before we will revive.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Review 回顧

At that time the Israelites were in a gathering. A group of Levites led the people in a prayer. We can divide the content into a few sections. The people began by reviewing God's faithfulness. They praised God for a few reasons. First, He is the **Creator** of all things. Look at Nehemiah 9:6 – "You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you." God did not only create the universe and everything in it, He also sustains the world by His power. He uses natural laws to keep everything in order. Second, God is the **Covenant-Maker**. Continue to read verse 7-8: 7 "You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. 8 You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite... And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous." God chose Abraham and made a covenant with him. God promised to bless Abraham with countless descendants, and gave them the land of Canaan. God blessed Israel just as He told Abraham. Third, God is also a

Compassionate Deliverer. Verse 9-10 say: 9 “And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea, 10 and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And you made a name for yourself, as it is to this day.” God saw the oppression of His people and He heard their plea for help. God showed compassion and delivered their ancestors from Egypt. He guided them through the wilderness and helped them settle in Canaan. Fourth, God is the **Commandment-Giver**. Move down to verse 13: “You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments.” God gave His people the Law through Moses. Those stipulations set them apart from other nations. The Law regulated the relationship between God and His people, and between the Israelites. God proved to be faithful in these four areas. God continues to show us grace to this day. He oversees world affairs. He established an eternal covenant with His believers through Jesus Christ. All who receive Jesus by faith become God’s children. They have a new life in Jesus. God also gives us the Bible as the rule book for our life. Read it, follow it and we will be blessed. Just like the Israelites, we should praise God for all His blessings. Please follow me in this prayer: “God, we thank You for creating the universe and everything in it. You sustain the world by Your power. You provide for all that we need. Above all else, You gave us Your Son, Jesus Christ. You deliver us from the bondage of sin. You restore our status as Your children. You give us the Bible as the blueprint for our life. You also established this church many years ago. You bless us with numerous faithful coworkers. We thank You in all these things. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”

2. Repent 悔改

After reviewing God’s blessings, the Israelites sincerely repented for their sins. Ever since their ancestors left Egypt, they had been rebellious to God. Verse 26-27 is a good snapshot of their spiritual status: 26 “Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their back and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies. 27 Therefore you gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering they cried out to you and you heard them from heaven, and according to your great mercies you gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies.” The “sin cycle” of the Israelites during the time of the judges is a perfect example for the descriptions. They **disobeyed** God by ignoring His Law. Hence, they followed the idols of the Canaan people. Then God raised up enemies to **discipline** His rebellious people. In their **distress**, they begged God for help. Out of His mercy, God called judges to **deliver** people from the oppression of the enemies. Soon after His people returned to peace, they started sinning again. Therefore, the cycle kept repeating. We as Christians go through the same pattern too. We like to insist on our ways. We disobey God and chase after the idols of money, fame and success. We have time for leisure activities but we do not have time for God. Therefore, God uses hardship to discipline us when He feels necessary. Difficulties remind us that we cannot go independent of Him. But God is always there when we cry out to Him in our distress. He delivers us out of trouble and brings us back to Him. What about our church? How do we

disobey God as a church? We feel comfortable to make our church a community center. People come and eat and chat, but we do not invite them to stay and study God's Word. We feel okay for people to come late and even absent. We honor people's freedom over God's commands. We disobey Jesus' Great Commission by failing to share the gospel. We feel uneasy and inconvenient to have newcomers attend our meetings. We do not want to offend our classmates and colleagues by telling them that we are Christians. I am sorry if I hurt your feelings. The fact is that I fall short in many ways too. If we are being honest with ourselves, we need to repent. I will read the following prayer and you can listen: "Lord, we are sorry that we disobey You as believers and as a church. We do not take our relationship with You seriously. We follow the world instead of Your Word. We care about ourselves but not Your glory. We have not been faithfully using the gifts, talents and resources you have given us. Humble us and change us. We are Your servants as we call You our Lord. This is Your church, not our club house. Use our lives and use this church as You please. In Jesus' name, amen."

3. Revive 復興

After the Israelites repented of their sins, they determined to take actions. A spiritual revival began when people turned away from their sins and turned back to God. The passage says civil and religious leaders led the people to rededicate themselves to the Lord. First, they promised to obey God in their **daily life**. Look at Nehemiah 10:29 – (The rest of the people) **join with their brothers, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord and his rules and his statutes.** They made a pledge to obey God's Word in daily life. They were willing to follow God's Law. Second, they determined to obey God in their **marriage life**. They said in verse 30: **"We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons."** Their children would marry Israelites only. They witnessed the detrimental effects of a mixed marriage with foreigners. From kings to ordinary people, they abandoned Jehovah and followed their spouses and bowed down to idols. It affected their moral values and lifestyle. The third commitment was regarding their **spiritual life**. Continue to read verse 31-32: **31 "And if the peoples of the land bring in goods or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day. And we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt. 32 We also take on ourselves the obligation to give yearly a third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God."** They made up their mind to observe the Sabbath. It was a day for people and animals to rest. People set aside that day to worship God. There was also a Sabbath year once every seventh year when people refrained from all farming activities so that the land could rest. God promised to provide them enough food even when no one worked in the fields for a full year. During that period, the Israelites should also cancel all debts on their peers. Moreover, they made a commitment in verse 32 to make the designated offering to the temple. The Israelites had a spiritual revival when they put God first in their lives. I am sure we long for a spiritual revival in our personal life and our church too. The first step is to recommit ourselves to the Lord. Today, we have an opportunity for members of this church to do so together. I will read six statements. Please respond with "amen" after

each clause if you agree. This is a covenant between you and God. You agree to make efforts with God's help. No one will accuse you if you do not fulfill your obligations perfectly. Sometime we may be forgetful or being too relaxed. We need to encourage each other constantly. First, I commit to make **Attendance** of church meetings a high priority. Second, I commit to build a habit of **Bible** reading in daily life. Third, I commit to support this church with the **Cash** God entrusts me. Fourth, I commit to perform the **Duties** that God puts me to serve in ministries. Fifth, I commit to participate in **Evangelism** when God so gives me the opportunity. Last one, sixth, I commit to conduct my **Family** life according to God's Word. We welcome you to register your membership with our church if those are your commitments to God and this church. Please fill out a membership form if you have not done so last Friday.

[Communion 聖餐]

I think there is no better way for us to celebrate our unity in the Lord other than observing the communion. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 that: **16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.** In the context, Paul rebukes the believers for their unfaithfulness to the Lord. Just like their ancestors did, they worshipped idols along with God. The Lord will not tolerate that kind of betrayal. He demands our undivided attention to Him. Therefore, as we partake the bread and the cup, let us remember that we are one body in the Lord. We thank Jesus for saving us and putting us in this church. We love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. We work hard together to build up this church on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

1. Observance of the Lord's Body 紀念主的身體

The same apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 – **23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."** Jesus used a loaf of bread to represent His body. He broke the bread to symbolize that His body was injured on the cross. Jesus willingly suffered for us and paid the penalty of sin. We should always remember His sacrifice for us, lest we may take His grace for granted.

2. Observance of the Lord's Blood 紀念主的寶血

Paul continues to say in verse 25 of the passage: **In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."** Jesus raised a cup that represented His blood. He shed His blood for us on the cross. His blood was real blood just like ours. His death was also a genuine death. Jesus, the Lamb of God laid down His life for us. That is why we need to give thanks to Him.

INTRODUCTION 引言

意識到自己的不足是解決問題的第一步。提出：「我需要幫助」需要一顆謙卑的心。對一個頑固的人是如此，對一個背逆的民族也是如此。聖經中以色列的屬靈光境可以用不順服這個詞來概括。尼希米記是關於神子民歷史上的一個轉折點。在巴比倫流亡之後，他們回到自己的家鄉。他們克服困難和阻力，重建了聖殿和耶路撒冷的城牆。硬件完成後，他們還必須更新軟件。他們必須恢復與神的關係。他們明白神使用外國來管教他們的不忠。現在神給他們第二次改正的機會。他們回到家之後，也需要回到神面前。我們的教會也需要神的幫助。我們今天能不能老老實實談談家事？我不想粉飾它，但我們的教會正在壽終正寢。我們可以感嘆人手和資源不足。我們可以一直重複多年來的事工來保持安全和舒適。結果不久之後，這個小教會就會縮小，變成一個家庭教會。好消息是：如果我們站在神那邊，神就會站在我們這邊。我們需要停止以我們的方式經營這個教會。我們需要問神希望我們成為怎樣的教會。這個負擔不僅落在我們的同工身上，也落在每一位視這裡為屬靈的家的成員身上。這就是今天慶典主日背後的含義。一方面，我們感謝神的一切祝福。另一方面，我們重新將自己委身給主和這間教會。就像以色列人一樣，我們必須回顧神的信實，悔改我們的罪，然後我們才能有復興。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Review 回顧

那時以色列人聚集在一起。一群利未人帶領百姓禱告。我們可以將其中的內容分成幾個部分。他們一開始回顧神的信實。他們在幾方面讚美神。首先，神是萬物的**創造者**。請看尼希米記 9:6 – 「你，惟獨你是耶和華！你造了天和天上的天，並天上的萬象，地和地上的萬物，海和海中所有的；這一切都是你所保存的。天軍也都敬拜你。」神不僅創造了宇宙和其中的一切，祂還用能力維持萬有。祂透過自然法則使一切井井有條。第二，神是**立約者**。繼續看 7-8 節：7 「你是耶和華神，曾揀選亞伯蘭，領他出迦勒底的吾理，給他改名叫亞伯拉罕。8 你見他在你面前心裏誠實，就與他立約，應許把迦南人... 之地賜給他的後裔，且應驗了你的話，因為你是公義的。」神揀選了亞伯拉罕，並與他立約。神應許要賜福給亞伯拉罕，使他有無數的後裔，並賜給他們迦南地。正如神告訴亞伯拉罕的那樣，祂祝福了以色列。第三，神也是一位有憐憫的拯救

者。9-10 節說：9「你曾看見我們列祖在埃及所受的困苦，垂聽他們在紅海邊的哀求，10 就施行神蹟奇事在法老和他一切臣僕，並他國中的眾民身上。你也得了名聲，正如今日一樣，因為你知道他們向我們列祖行事狂傲。」神看到了祂子民所受的壓迫，也聽到了他們的求助。神憐憫他們，將他們的祖宗從埃及救出來。祂帶領他們越過曠野，幫助他們在迦南定居。第四，神是誠命的立約者。請看第 13 節：「你也降臨在西奈山，從天上與他們說話，賜給他們正直的典章、真實的律法、美好的條例與誠命。」神藉著摩西將律法賜給祂的子民。這些規定使他們從萬民中被分別出來。律法規範了神和子民之間以及以色列人之間的關係。神在這四個方面證明祂是信實的。直到今天，神繼續向我們施恩。祂監督世上的事務。祂通過耶穌基督與信徒立了永恆的盟約。所有因信心接受耶穌的人都成為神的兒女。他們在耶穌裡有了新的生命。神也賜給我們聖經作為生活的準則。閱讀並遵循聖經，我們就會得到祝福。就像以色列人一樣，我們應該為神所有的祝福而讚美祂。請跟著我以下的禱告：「神啊，我們感謝祢創造了宇宙和其中的一切。祢以能力維持世界。祢供應我們所需要的一切。最重要的是，祢賜下祢的兒子耶穌基督。祢救我們脫離罪的捆綁。祢恢復我們兒女的地位。祢給了我們聖經作為生活的藍圖。許多年前祢也建立了這個教會。祢賜給我們眾多忠心的同工。我們在所有這些事情上感謝祢。奉耶穌的名禱告，阿們。」

2. Repent 悔改

回顧神的祝福之後，以色列人真誠地為自己的罪悔改。自從他們的祖宗離開埃及後，他們就一直悖逆神。第 26-27 節很貼切地描述他們的屬靈狀況：26「然而，他們不順從，竟背叛你，將你的律法丟在背後，殺害那勸他們歸向你的眾先知，大大惹動你的怒氣。27 所以你將他們交在敵人的手中，磨難他們。他們遭難的時候哀求你，你就從天上垂聽，照你的大憐憫賜給他們拯救者，救他們脫離敵人的手。」以色列人在士師時期的「罪惡循環」就是一個完美的例子。他們因漠視神的律法而違背神。因此，他們跟隨迦南人拜偶像。然後神興起仇敵來管教悖逆的子民。他們在苦難中呼求神的幫助。因著神的憐憫，祂呼召士師來拯救子民脫離仇敵的壓迫。但是當他們恢復平靜後不久，他們又再次犯罪。因此，這個循環不斷重複。我們作為基督徒也經歷了同樣的模式。我們喜歡堅持自己的方式。我們違背神，追逐金錢、名望和成功等偶像。我們有時間進行休閒活動，但我們沒有時間留給神。所以神在必要的時候，就用苦難來管教我們。困難提醒我們，我們不能離開神。但當我們在苦難中向神呼求時，祂總是在那裡。祂拯救我們脫離苦難，帶我們回到祂的身邊。至於我們的教會呢？作為一所教會，我們如何違背神？我們很樂意讓這個教會成為社區活動中心。人們來這裡吃飯聊天，但我們沒有邀請他們留下來學習神的話語。我們覺

得人們遲到甚至缺席都沒有問題。我們尊重別人的自由而不是神的命令。我們違背了耶穌的大使命，沒有去傳福音。當新朋友參加我們的聚會時，我們感到不舒服和不方便。我們不想冒犯同學和同事，告訴他們我們是基督徒。很抱歉我傷害了你的感受。事實上，我在很多方面也做得不好。如果我們對自己誠實，我們就需要悔改。我會讀下面的禱告，請你聆聽：「主啊，我們對不起祢，作為信徒和教會，我們都違背了祢。我們不認真地看待我們與祢的關係。我們跟隨世界而不是跟隨祢的話。我們關心自己而不關心祢的榮耀。我們沒有忠誠地使用祢給我們的恩賜、才幹和資源。謙卑我們，改變我們。我們是祢的僕人，因為我們稱祢為我們的主。這是祢的教會，不是我們的俱樂部。隨祢的心意來使用我們的生命和這個教會。奉耶穌的名，阿們。」

3. Revive 復興

以色列人為他們的罪悔改之後，他們決定採取行動。當人們轉離他們的罪並轉向神之時，屬靈的復興就開始了。這段經文說，民間和宗教領袖帶領人們重新委身於神。首先，他們承諾在**日常生活中順服神**。請看尼希米記 10:29 節 – (其餘的人) **都隨從他們貴冑的弟兄，發咒起誓，必遵行神藉他僕人摩西所傳的律法，謹守遵行耶和華—我們主的一切誠命、典章、律例**。他們起誓要在日常生活中遵守神的話語。他們願意遵行神的律法。第二，他們決定在**婚姻生活中順服神**。他們在第 30 節說：「(我們) **並不將我們的女兒嫁給這地的居民，也不為我們的兒子娶他們的女兒**。」他們的兒女只會和以色列人結婚。他們目睹了與外邦人通婚的負面影響。從君王到一般人，他們都離棄了耶和華，跟隨自己的配偶拜偶像。這影響了他們的道德價值觀和生活形態。第三個承諾是關於他們的**屬靈生活**。繼續讀 31-32 節：**31「這地的居民若在安息日，或甚麼聖日，帶了貨物或糧食來賣給我們，我們必不買。每逢第七年必不耕種，凡欠我們債的必不追討。32 我們又為自己定例，每年各人捐銀一舍客勒三分之一，為我們神殿的使用。」**他們決定遵守安息日。這是人和牲畜休息的日子。人們把那一天用來敬拜神。此外，每七年有一個安息年，人們停止一切農耕活動，好讓土地能夠休息。縱使沒有人在田裡工作一整年，神也應許為他們提供足夠的糧物。在此期間，以色列人也必須取消對同鄉的所有債務。此外，他們在第 32 節中承諾向聖殿獻上指定的供物。當以色列人把神放在生命的首位時，他們就有了屬靈的復興。我相信我們都渴望我們個人和教會中都有屬靈的復興。第一步是重新委身於主。今天，我們有機會讓整個教會的成員一起這樣做。我將宣讀六份聲明。如果你同意的話，請在每個條款後回應「阿們」。這是你和神之間的盟約。你同意在神的幫助下努力。如果你沒有完美地履行你的義務，沒有人會指責你。有時我們可能會健忘或過於放鬆。我們需要經常互相鼓勵。首先，我承諾將出席教會聚會視為優先事項。第二，我承諾在日常生活中養成讀聖經

的習慣。第三，我承諾用神所賜給我的金錢支持這個教會。第四，我承諾履行神賦予我的職責，投身事奉。第五，當神給我機會時，我承諾參與傳福音的事工。最後一項，第六，我承諾按照神的話語來管理我的家庭生活。如果這些是你對神和這個教會的承諾，我們邀請你註冊成為這個教會的會友。如果你上週五沒有填寫會員登記表，請你填寫。

[Communion 聖餐]

我認為沒有比遵守聖餐更好的方式來慶祝我們在主裡的合一。保羅在哥林多前書 10:16-17 中說：**16 我們所祝福的杯，豈不是同領基督的血嗎？我們所擘開的餅，豈不是同領基督的身體嗎？17 我們雖多，仍是一個餅，一個身體，因為我們都是分受這一個餅。**在上下文中，保羅責備信徒對主不忠。就像他們的祖先一樣，他們同時敬拜神又敬拜偶像。主不會容忍這樣的背叛。祂要求我們對祂全人全意。因此，當我們分享餅和杯時，讓我們記住我們在主裡是一個身體。我們感謝耶穌拯救我們並將我們放在這個教會中。我們在基督裡像弟兄姐妹一樣彼此相愛。我們一起努力工作，在耶穌基督的基礎上建立這個教會。

1. Observance of the Lord's Body 紀念主的身體

同一位使徒保羅在哥林多前書 11:23-24 說：**23 我當日傳給你們的，原是從主領受的，就是主耶穌被賣的那一夜，拿起餅來，24 祝謝了，就擘開，說：「這是我的身體，為你們捨的，你們應當如此行，為的是記念我。」**耶穌用一個餅來代表祂的身體。祂擘餅象徵著祂的身體在十字架上受了傷。耶穌心甘情願地為我們受苦以償還罪的代價。我們應該永遠記念祂為我們付出的犧牲，以免我們把祂的恩典看為理所當然。

2. Observance of the Lord's Blood 紀念主的寶血

保羅在這段經文的第 25 節繼續說：**飯後，也照樣拿起杯來，說：「這杯是用我的血所立的新約，你們每逢喝的時候，要如此行，為的是記念我。」**耶穌舉起代表祂寶血的杯。祂在十字架上為我們流血。祂的血和我們的一樣是真血。祂的死也是真正的死。耶穌，神的羔羊，為我們捨命。這就是為什麼我們應該感謝祂。